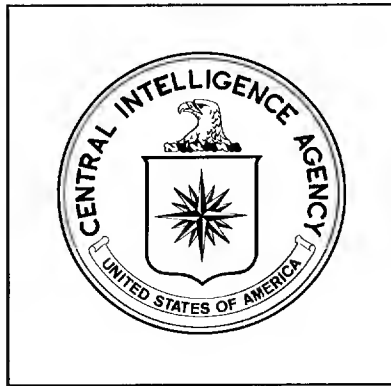


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MIDDLE EAST – AFRICA – SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Saudi Arabia

Budget Provides Rationale for Aid Cutbacks

1 | Riyadh last week released a record budget for
the 1976 fiscal year. The budget exaggerates probable
expenditures, apparently to rationalize a major cut
in foreign aid and to justify Saudi oil policy. The
1,3 | unreality of the budget is indicated by the fact the
Saudis are predicting a deficit of \$4.3 billion; they
will probably emerge at the end of the year with a
surplus of \$7 billion or more.

1,2,3 | Expenditures are slated at an unrealistically
high \$31.8 billion--more than 2.5 times the amount
spent last year. The Saudis may manage to spend part
of the planned increase in defense outlays--scheduled
to jump from under \$3 billion to over \$7 billion--but
administrative and resource bottlenecks rule out the
expenditure of even \$20 billion, unless aid outlays
far exceed the amount budgeted. Earnings during the
fiscal year are likely to be at least as large as
1,3 | the \$27.2 billion forecast in the budget, and an in-
crease in oil prices this fall would boost the total.

3 | Riyadh probably will use the budget to put off
aid requesters when it suits Saudi purposes. The
projected deficit can serve as a handy excuse to main-
tain oil production at 7 million barrels a day or more
and could also be used to justify further price hikes.
It also can help justify the low aid budget--one third
of last year's disbursements.

Expenditures under the budget will have a dramatic
impact on Saudi development. Economic growth outside
the oil industry will accelerate, and large quantities
of foreign goods and labor will be imported. The pres-
sure on resources will probably aggravate domestic
inflation. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Guinea-France

Relations Restored

1, 2 | Guinea and France resumed diplomatic relations on July 14 after a ten-year break. Restoration of ties follows several months of difficult negotiations between Paris and Conakry in which several thorny issues were settled and other problems were left for future discussion.

2 | Paris apparently initiated the contacts to normalize relations and made several gestures to meet conditions raised by Toure. The French reportedly agreed to pay \$44 million to the Guinean government for pensions to Guinean veterans of the French army. Paris suspended the pension payments in 1965 when Toure broke relations after charging that France and Ivory Coast were plotting to overthrow his regime. The French have also suppressed a Guinean exile newspaper published in France in a move to curb activities there of anti-Toure elements. Paris, however, refused Toure's demand that Guinean exiles in France be turned over to his government.

1, 2 | Over the past year, Toure--who is clearly angling for French aid to help Guinea's chronically troubled economy--released a number of French citizens who had been imprisoned in Guinea on charges of conspiring against the government. The remaining prisoners will probably be released soon. Considering the history of stormy relations between Guinea and France, both countries are likely to be cautious in their dealings with each other and French economic aid may not be as large as Toure envisions. (CONFIDENTIAL)



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